EDGE | YOUR GUIDE TO WORKING IN THE VIDEOGAME INDUSTRY

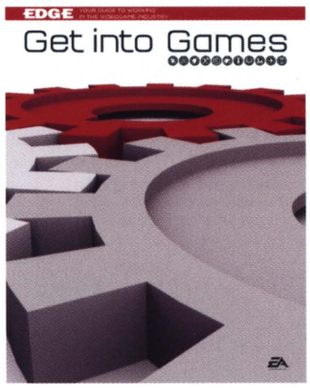
Get into Games



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The videogame industry is famed for being cyclical. Each new generation of hardware drives a pattern of growth: budgets, demands and team sizes all go up, and then there's a period of consolidation in which the unsuccessful studios go under and the recruitment drive tapers off. All things being equal, that's the situation we should be looking at now. But the videogame industry isn't quite the same animal it used to be. Partly that's down to the power of the technology: both Xbox 360 and PS3 are going to be capable of sucking up what ever-expanding teams can throw at them for a while yet. And partly it's because those games aren't just prettier, they're being made for a much more complex world, where users expect to be able to create and share content, where publishers want to be able to leverage micro-payments, where Hollywood actors are beginning to view videogames as a credible medium. And that means new roles are required: network programmers, scriptwriters, community managers, voice-acting co-ordinators. More interesting still is the effect of the industry's diversification. In the old days, you could make one game and port it from SNES to Mega Drive, or from PlayStation to Saturn. Now, with Wii, DS, and PSN/Live Arcade all offering distinct possibilities and making unique development demands, studios need different games – and different teams – for each. So this time around, the hunger for new staff seems to be sustaining, rather than tapering off. Which means there has never been a better time, or a wider variety of ways, to get into games. Hopefully the knowledge shared in this dedicated supplement will help you on your path.



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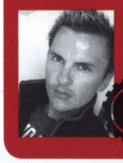
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CRAIG SULLIVAN
DESIGNER, EA
(CRITERION)

Profile: Designer

The keenly coveted job can be the hardest to land

Overview

It may be the game job most gamers want, but there are few roles available, and no guaranteed way to get started. Game design courses are still not highly respected, and sending studios an 80-page precis of the convoluted backstory to your epic FPS will only get you ignored. A better bet is to get some hands-on experience, perhaps by modding levels of existing games, or building a prototype in Flash. Or, if you want to sell yourself on ideas alone, write a short, structured design document, emphasising how your game will play and what makes it different, rather than getting bogged down in story or setting. It can also be worth including critiques of existing games. Don't try to review the whole thing: pick an element – how levels are unlocked, say, or how health works – and explain why it's flawed, how you would improve it, and what the consequences of those changes would be. Or there's the old-fashioned way: get that job in QA and work until you drop.





***Burnout Paradise* is typical of modern games: more than 100 people work to make real the vision of a group of collaborating designers**

How did you get started in the videogame industry?

I've always been a huge fan of videogames. My earliest memories of playing them are when I was about eight years old and my parents would take me on caravanning holidays to France. Instead of spending time outside in the sun I'd always find whatever arcade machine they had at the campsite and play it non-stop until I'd finish it. During high school I was heavily into art and design and did particularly well in those subjects. When I finished high school I wasn't really interested in going to university, I just wanted to get out into the real world as soon as possible and start working and creating – the quickest way of doing this was to go on a two-year BTEC course in Design and Reprographics.

Two years later I finished college and went straight to work for a national newspaper specialising in DTP. Good fun but ultimately a little limiting on the creative side. All through this period I was using my earnings to buy videogames and consoles, mostly imported from Japan, and would meet with my friends every Saturday at the local arcade to play the newest releases. Work at the newspaper was good and I was being paid well for a 20-year-old, but I knew it wasn't something I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I had just started buying a new videogame magazine called **Edge**. **Edge** was the first magazine where I saw job advertisements for the games industry, and as soon as I realised jobs like this existed my mind was made up; I was going to get into the games industry.

I knew it was going to be tough. I had no relevant qualifications other than that fact that I was really good at playing games, read all the right magazines and could talk passionately about what I was playing and what I thought made a good and a bad game. I sent out about 20 CVs with letters attached and went to three or four interviews – all for a job as an entry-level tester in quality assurance (QA).

> "I did nothing but work and sleep. I figured I'd be the hardest worker on the QA team and show everyone I was capable of more"

On the 364th day of searching I was offered a job for £6,500 working as an entry level tester at Millennium Interactive. I moved into a bedsit in Cambridge which cost £4,000 a year in rent. For the next year and a half I did nothing but work and sleep. I figured that I had no money so I wouldn't even try to have a social life – I'd be the hardest worker on the QA team and show everyone I was capable of more. It worked. I was promoted a few times quickly and managed to get a job on a development team working in a design role on a new project.



Games like *Black* showcase a designer's ability to closely observe existing games, and find ways to refine them, or to introduce a new empahsis

All gamers have those moments where they think: 'I could have designed that better'. What do you think people most underestimate about the job of being a game designer?

The biggest mistake I see designers making is forgetting who their customer is. We are making entertainment that should be fun and accessible to as wide an audience as possible. It's not about making the most hardcore game in the world, or making something so niche that it only appeals to a small market. I want everyone to have fun playing the games we make. The biggest compliment you can get as a designer is that someone you meet in 'normal' life has bought and played one of your games, not just the internet forum guys or the hardcore gamers. I want the guy who works at the local pub to have played *Burnout* or *Black* and have had a good experience.

What's the best preparation for someone hoping to become a game designer?

Play everything and always have constructive opinions. Be open-minded and try to be innovative. Be able to break a game down into specifically what's good and bad and what you would change to make it better. Anyone can say something is shit for no reason; not many people can make the right changes to make something great. Write a list and test yourself – the detail is always the hardest thing to nail.

Modding and personal game projects are always good. When I interview people who show me that games are their passion and they have done something that will prepare them for the industry it's always a good sign.

How has the role of game designer changed over the last five years?

It's changed massively. Gone are the days of lone designers and small teams. On *Burnout Paradise* we have a team of ten designers and a wider team of over 100. Design is now highly collaborative and happens in groups around whiteboards in the middle of the team area. Moving forward we're going to have to be quicker and more iterative, and use cross-discipline groups to get ideas to software quicker, and always push for quality.

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ROB YESCOMBE (SCREENWRITER, FREE RADICAL)

Profile: Writer

Is your pen mightier than a BFG?

How did you get started in the industry?

I guess it was pretty unconventional. I never got any kind of writing qualification or anything like that. I started writing professionally about ten years ago while I was still doing my degree – Fine Art Contemporary Critical Theory and Studio Practice, if you're interested. I was writing three different series for an Indian cable TV network. It was great because it was so obscure that the ITC never kept tabs on it, which meant I had a freedom I really shouldn't have had. Paedophile gags at 3pm on a Sunday isn't something most channels will let you get away with. Anyway, oddly, that was a bit of a break for me, because it woke me up to something I enjoyed doing. So, from there I did my hard yards in script reports and book-right reads, before graduating to feature development. What led me to Free Radical specifically was a sitcom I wrote. It was shortlisted for a TAPS award, and TAPS happened to be one of the organisations that Free Radical approached when they started looking for a screenwriter. As soon as I heard about it, I absolutely savaged the application. I've always loved games – the storytelling possibilities and all that – so I asked everyone I'd worked with to send recommendations. I was lucky enough to have kind words from Momentum Pictures, Crystal Sky, ITV and a bunch of others. Free Radical wanted a 12-page sample, so I sent them what they wanted, along with two feature-length screenplays and a massive document of design ideas. Of course, they didn't need my ideas – but it went a long way to proving just how much I wanted it. I'm as excited about what I do today as I was then.

What's a typical day like for you?

It all depends on the stage of the project. Some guys here have a pretty steady, constant workload, but mine is very much peaks and troughs. I might go two or three days with basically very little to do, but then have to churn out a new draft in a matter of days, sometimes hours. I'll leave it to other people to say whether I'm actually any good or not, but the one thing I can say about myself is that I'm fast. With all that spare time, I didn't want to be sitting on my arse eating carrot cake, so I've become heavily involved in casting and directing the voice actors, as well as assisting with the screen direction in the animation. Alongside that I also write the website, and do a bit of our PR. I also eat carrot cake.

> "The playability of a product is a lot more important than my disgustingly obese ego"



Without a good story, one gun battle can feel the same as the next, no matter how thrilling

How much interplay does a writer have with designers? Do your story ideas inform their game design decisions, or do you have to fit around them?

I'd like to think it's a two-way street, but I'm a firm believer that design should come way before the story. On a creative level, that can be a little restrictive, but the playability of the product is a hell of a lot more important than my disgustingly obese ego. Well, some of the time at least. That said, the overarching story is basically my domain, but I definitely follow their lead when it comes to individual game units. I'm lucky – because the story is developed alongside the game, it's pretty rare for the guys to design something that doesn't fit into the story anyway.



Writers need to make a whole world come alive, not just the action. Detail is therefore important

What's the best preparation for someone considering becoming a game writer?

Play a shitload of games. It sounds obvious, but we've seen some great 'Hollywood screenwriters' have a go at writing a game, but without an understanding of how games and interactivity actually function, they're just trying to crowbar something rigid into something flexible. It might get by, but it won't be the better for it.

As for me, I didn't get any writing qualifications. When I was doing film and TV, I just read a few Syd Field books, and watched as many movies as my brain would allow. The same practice applies here, I think. Just understand your medium of choice, then start writing until you get good.



Game writers now have to make worlds like that of Free Radical's *Haze* come alive via the use of scripts, websites, press releases and preproduction notes

Overview

Wondering if you're a writer? Here's a handy test: do you write? If you do, then you might be. If you don't, you'll need to ask yourself why not, and you may find that answer is that you're not a writer. Writing is unique in that it needs no special training, equipment or preparation. Lots of people who think they might be writers are waiting for the perfect circumstances. Lots of people who already are writers know that there are no perfect circumstances. It's a true for game writing as it is for novels, film scripts or journalism: the way to get started is to start. You may face an uphill struggle in an industry that is still slow to recognise the value of specialised, experienced writing talent, but the change has already begun. So start writing. Consider a relevant degree in creative or script writing, but don't depend on one. Pitch yourself to studios. Be prepared to help out with wordy tasks – giving press interviews, perhaps, or writing the website. But first and foremost, write.



RICK COLES
PROGRAMMER
BLACK ROCK STUDIO
(FORMERLY CLIMAX RACING)

Profile: Programmer

Coders are the heart of a studio: without them, there's nothing

Overview

In some respects the path into game programming has been more stable than many others in the industry. A relevant degree, which by no means needs to be game specific, from a good institution is still the most straightforward door opener. The good news is that the industry is crying out for able programmers of all sorts – general, audio, physics, online, etc – so able graduates have a fighting chance of getting a good game job.

Integral to every stage of the design process, programmers aren't any more necessarily working from scratch, or even directly on a single game. The need to create stable tools and pipelines, to ensure that technology can be used across a number of different projects, means that game programming is becoming more like general software programming in its emphasis on collaboration and consistency, rather than the working practices of the renegade game programming geniuses of the '70s and '80s.

How did you get started in the videogame industry?
I started in the industry about eight years ago. At the time I was working for a non-games software company and interested in switching to games – I was very fortunate that a friend in the industry recommended me. I expect my PhD in physics played a significant role alongside the recommendation in me getting the job.

What is a typical day like for you?
Early in the project there are lots of meetings with designers and artists to establish initial requirements for the game itself and any tools. There are also lots of meetings with other programmers for usually broad-strokes discussions on code and scheduling. At this stage I might not write any real code for weeks at a time.

During the bulk of the project my day is mostly taken up with designing, implementing and debugging the code required to accomplish the areas of the game for which I am the programmer responsible. This will often depend heavily on input from artists and, especially in my case, designers. For example, when coding vehicle handling there's usually daily discussions with the designers who decide how the game should play. Towards the end of the project most days are a frantic scramble of bug fixing and optimisation work.

What languages/tools do you use?
Pretty much all my programming is done in C++, though Python is used for controlling the data build pipeline. I use Microsoft's Visual Studio .NET for all my code writing, plus debugging on the 360. For PS3 debugging I use the ProDG tools. Version control of the source code is done with AccuRev.

Traditionally, programmers implement the designer's ideas; is that flow of ideas reversing now that things like physics effects are driving game decisions?
I think it's been something of a two-way process for some time now. Design decisions have always been affected by what programmers can actually implement, which sometimes may be something the designers hadn't even considered. Though things like increasingly realistic and complicated physics are playing their part, in my experience this is under the control of design, not the other way round. My personal opinion is that games should always be strongly design led – who cares how good the physics is or how flashy the graphical effects are if the game is no fun to play!

How specialised is programming becoming? How early on should prospective programmers start thinking about what speciality may suit them?
I'm not sure the roles have become significantly more specialised during my time in the industry. By which I mean there have been graphics experts, physics experts, etc, for some time. Some of these roles are very specialised but every game requires an awful lot of code that doesn't fit into a neat specialist area. My advice would be not to worry about specialising but to get a good overall knowledge of programming and think about the particular issues that games programmers face. A company looking to fill a very specific niche role is likely to turn to someone with experience anyway. However, it's easier to match the requirements of a 'general' programmer and you can then find out what the different roles are really like and decide how you want to specialise in the future, if at all. Of course, if you're really interested in a particular area then learn more about it but don't feel the need to specialise and keep hold of the bigger picture.

How do you think the job of a game programmer will change over the next five years?
In my opinion, the main trends will be driven by the move to the ever larger team sizes. I believe this will require game teams, especially the programmers, to become increasingly organised and think more in terms of conventional software engineering than the 'old school' clever but fast-and-loose approaches – working as part of a team is more important than ever. Also, due to the huge amount of content, programmers will have to devote more effort on tools and the art/design pipeline than has been necessary in the past. Middleware is also likely to play a larger role in the future.

> "It's easier to match the requirements of a 'general' programmer and you can then find out what the different roles are really like"



Games like *MotoGP '07* are prime examples of how more detailed and complicated physics models can affect decisions made about control schemes or differing game modes or difficulties



LEON WARREN
LEAD ARTIST
TRAVELLERS TALES

Profile: Artist

Can you draw yourself into a gaming job?

How did you get started in the industry?
It was a happy accident! I was doing a degree in maths and computing when one of the students on my course needed some graphics doing for a computer game he was writing. I jumped at the chance to do some art again. After the degree he set up a small company working on a game for Psygnosis and asked me if I wanted a job. I definitely landed on my feet and I haven't looked back.

What tools and programs do you use?
We use Maya and Photoshop for the most part. We also have a lot of in-house editors and tools that work either in Maya or on the console themselves. For the most part the level is built in Maya, but a lot of the level detail and gameplay is placed in afterwards using the editors. The instant feedback for both gameplay and visuals is essential and it gives great power to the artist to make their levels full and extravagant. It can also make it extremely easy to adjust the incidental parts of the level to allow for the odd gameplay tweak.

How has the role of a game artist changed over the last five years?
As the quality of the art is rapidly improving, especially with the power of the new consoles, people are having to specialise more and more. Pretty much the days of the jack of all trades are gone; however, there are still roles, especially in the setting up and technical aspect of the project, for people who have talents in multiple areas. People are probably best to start by trying out various disciplines and then focusing on areas that they are more comfortable in, feel better suited to and more importantly enjoy the most.

How much more demanding have Xbox 360 and PS3 made your job?
The amount of time needed to produce good quality next-gen art is the area I've noticed the biggest change so either projects need longer development time or significantly increasing team size. If the project is a movie tie-in, as a lot of our games are, the deadlines are very inflexible. This itself brings more demands on the management side of the art creation as there are more people to manage and support. However, it's these new consoles that are allowing us to get the beautiful visuals that all artists strive for.

> "It's the challenge that drives me to do the best I can with what I've got"

The videogame industry is often criticised for being too conservative – too reliant on guns and cars, etc. How much scope for real creativity is there?
Games can be as creative and stylised as the design wants to make them, but generally it's less of a gamble to stick with tried and tested.

From a level artist perspective my creativity comes from the look of the level, and even when it's dictated by a film you can still get your personal touches in and make it as realistic or interesting as you can. It's the challenge that drives me to do the best I can with what I've got.

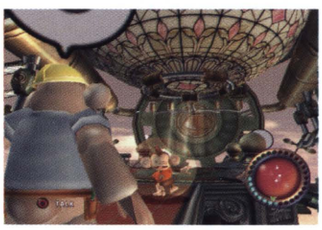
A lot of asset production across the industry is now being outsourced. Is working for an outsourcing agency a good way to get a start in the industry?
Any way of getting your foot in the door is good. The way to get good at anything it is to do it, so any kind of hands-on industry experience is extremely useful – along with an appreciation of deadlines! It also gets a portfolio together. A good way to improve yourself is amongst a team all striving for the same result – you can't put a price on the support and shared knowledge this can offer.

What's the most frustrating – and rewarding – aspect of your job?
The biggest frustration is the consoles never have enough power! They are getting better and massively improved from when I first started 13 years ago. Also, with increasing team sizes, more management has meant less actual art time. I really enjoy the direction side but I do miss my roots in the industry.

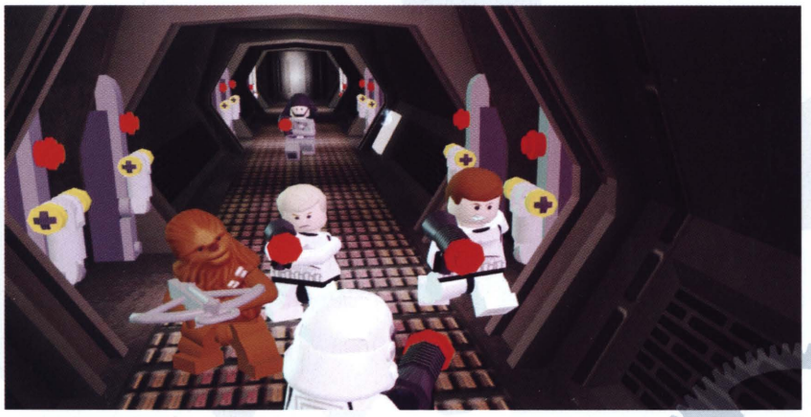
The best part is it's a job that you can pretty much make as fun and exciting as you want. Set your own goals and keep bettering yourself, working with a team of very talented artists. There is always something new to learn, and the projects we have been lucky to work on have been really exciting and often surreal. It's great to be able to do a job I love and one my children seem so proud of!

Overview

We call them videogames because they're a visual medium, but the range of artistry they require is one of the things that makes the common comparison with film so flawed. A game's art team has to see everything: a film's production designer isn't worried about the casting. A casting agent isn't worried about locations. A location scout isn't also designing the opening titles. But game artists do the lot. It's part of why art jobs are becoming increasingly specialised, but it's also why game art is such an appealing proposition. From designing characters to visualising alien landscapes, from researching early breech-loading rifle designs to photographing Monument Valley, it can be a hugely varied and stimulating environment. Although now heavily technically dependent, there's always strong demand for artists with good classic skills and bottomless imaginations, so a good portfolio is key. You'll need to show aptitude for a variety of styles, and it's worth tailoring what you show to a specific studio's output.



Some games – such as *Super Monkey Ball Adventure* – deliver on the artist's long-held dream of being able to use games to make their colourful, fertile imagination come to life



The *Lego Star Wars* games demonstrate that even within a doubly licensed product, there's room for real flair in how your interpret well-known scenes and characters



RALPH PALMER
ANIMATION DIRECTOR, EA

Profile: Animator

A move into games could put the moves into games

Overview

Looking back at the sprite sheets the industry relied on not so long ago, it's remarkable how fast animation has evolved. Animators now have to take a flexible approach which may integrate hand animation with data gathered from motion-capture or based on movements calculated automatically by procedural animation engines. The new high-end gaming platforms have also pushed expectations through the roof, so that issues like foot-planting and facial expression, which could once be glossed over, are now clearly exposed. Poor, characterless or repetitive animation can sap the life out of a game and break the suspension of disbelief, so excelling in the integration of these techniques is key to a game's success. Good animation communicates a character's personality, as well as giving a real sense that they're connected to the environment, and providing clear, informative feedback on what they're doing, or what is being done to them.

How did you get started in the industry?
I have been interested in games for some time, but I just kept ticking along in film. But then the opportunity came along to not only work for EA but to work on Harry Potter! I'd spent my entire career in the arena of family entertainment in film, and to be able to move to games at this time on such a wonderful franchise was clearly a win-win.

What's a typical day like for you?
At this point I'm not sure there is a typical day for me. I know that sounds clichéd but I joined in the middle of full-blown production, inheriting all that was good and bad before me. The words 'learning curve' took on a whole new meaning. Where I was very well experienced in film production, which is essentially linear, I had no idea how large and complex building a game was.

What tools and programs do you use?
I think I'd have to say my most important tools are my senses – more specifically observation and listening. So often we end up scurrying around looking for answers or solutions when they are in plain sight. In terms of programs, I use mainly Maya, XSI and Photoshop.

How rapidly is game animation evolving at the moment, as motion capture and procedural techniques become more closely integrated with traditional animation methods?
Good question. It appears that there is now a very real evolutionary bell-curve acceleration technically and, for lack of a better word, spiritually regarding games. The word 'games' is itself morphing into interactive entertainment, active being an interesting piece of the latter. Look at the simple but brilliant Wii – a game platform you could physically knock yourself unconscious with.

Motion capture has been around in one form or another for many decades. While in the right hands it can be a tremendous boost to a production – Disney and Pixar Films have it down pat – inversely when let loose without an artistic hand to shape it, a mind-numbing outcome is ensured. Choose examples for yourself – there are plenty! As far as procedural animation goes, I'd say that's still an open book. Certainly the software is up to the task, but it's the platforms themselves and clever programming that will be what keep pushing it forward.

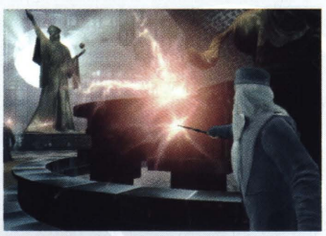
How easy is to move across from other animation fields into game animation?
Moving over to games from film is comfortable enough if and only if you keep your eyes and ears open and pay attention. They have plenty of things in common but the other stuff – the game-specific stuff – takes, I think, more enthusiasm and maybe wits than anything else to get you across.

Now that so many games are aiming at realistic human movement from their characters, is there less scope for expression in game animation?
This depends entirely on the game's direction. Again, caricature of design and kinetics are key here. There can still be a human look but subtle enhancement will actually make it more human. So as far as expression goes it is only limited by the character itself not the medium. With the exception of cutscene versus in-game animations, everything else is pretty much the same.

Game programming and art production are becoming increasingly specialised. How much is the same true of animation?
The field is certainly growing all the time, even if people aren't specialising. The most frustrating thing is that I wish I knew it all end to end – I sure am trying.

What's the most rewarding aspect of your job?
It's simple. The most rewarding aspect of my job is watching someone, without an interest in me, enjoy playing our game.

> "Moving over to games from film is comfortable enough if and only if you keep your eyes and ears open and pay attention"

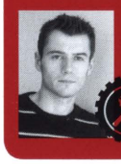




Games like *Harry Potter*, based as they are on another visual medium, might seem to stifle creativity. But a good animator will still need to find ways of conveying each actor's personality

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ANDY GIBSON
SOFTWARE ENGINEER
SN SYSTEMS

Overview

As the videogame industry grows, so does the range of ways in which you can get involved. Peripheral, but essential, jobs now include things like specialist mo-cap system operators, art outsourcers and tools and middleware programmers. While these positions lack the immediate glamour of working on a high-profile AAA title, their input is just as important; without them, there would be no high-profile AAA title. Tools and middleware companies – even successful ones – live and die on their reputation for customer support, so those looking to move into the field will need to develop a sound understanding of game programming techniques so they can respond to problems and requests with insight and accuracy. And while it may not offer the instant wish-fulfilment of getting to join your dream studio, you also avoid the horrors of working on cancelled games, or on projects where crunch periods stretch out into endless months of overtime.

Profile: Tools programmer

As consoles get more complex, so must their support software

How did you get started in the videogame industry?
I graduated from Cambridge in 2004, where I read General Engineering, specialising in electronics and information processing. After the usual post-university round-the-world trek I landed up in Bristol, and started to pursue a career in software. Whilst not a main part of my degree, I was able to apply my skills to the role and have progressed ever since. I wasn't looking for a job in the industry specifically, but I enjoy gaming and I'm delighted to be a part of its future.

What's a typical day like for you?
We take customer support very seriously, and we have a close relationship with game developers; a few hours in the morning will involve discussing support issues and requests from game developers with our customer support team.

After that, it really depends on what stage of our release schedule the debugger is at. We decide upon the feature set for a particular release a few months prior and assign tasks between the five members of the team. So for a standard release cycle of approximately a month, weeks one, two and three I'll be implementing the features assigned to me and working on any bugs from the previous release that crop up in the mean time.

Week four I'll integrate my feature changes into our release branch, document them, and spend the week testing changes from other members of the team and fixing any bugs. We take it in turns to manage the release itself; one of the advantages of working in such a small team is having responsibility for all aspects of the development. As I've mentioned, we'll make decisions about what major features a release will include about two months prior; our roadmap is largely driven by the game developers' requests. Along the cycle we'll often have room to fit in a few features if we think they'll be helpful.

My job also sometimes involves the opportunity for travel – I recently presented to around 250 game developers at the SCEE DevStation 07 in London and at the SCEA DevCon conference near San Francisco. I've also visited many studios in Europe and North America, listening to feedback and trying to make sure they are getting the most out of the tools.

Working hours are flexible, but I try to keep a 9-to-5.30 routine, give or take. Lunch in the kitchen is dominated by the shouts congruous with the passionate application of *PES 6* on PS3 – I can be found scoring goals from 12:30 most days.

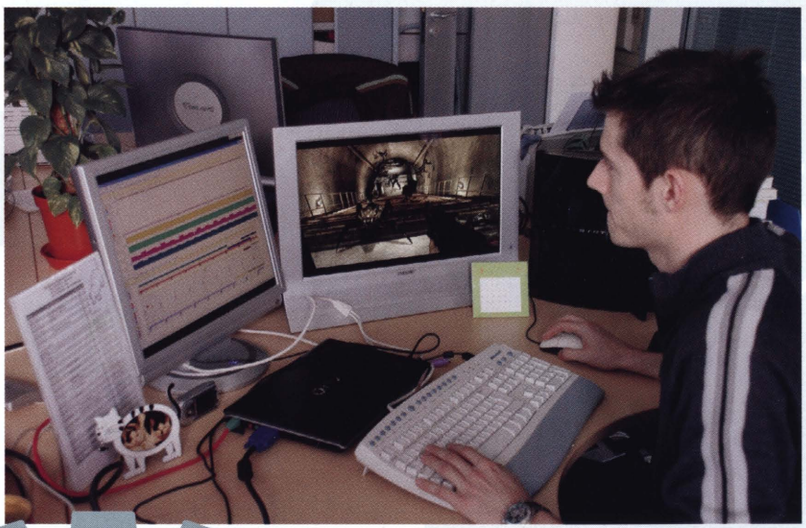
What languages/tools do you use?
Development is done in C++ and we've just moved over to Visual Studio 2005 from VS2003. We use Perforce for source control and use Python quite a lot for miscellaneous scripting tasks. We find Boundschecker useful for checking for memory leaks after big changes and we have cruisecontrol running regular builds, unit tests and generating reports.

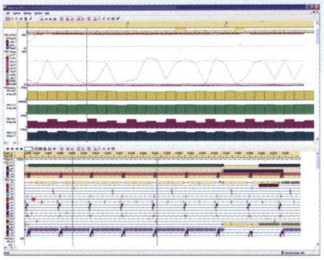
> "One of the advantages of working in such a small team is having responsibility for all aspects of the development"

Being a tools programmer, are you envious of those working on glamorous titles, or does this job have its own rewards?
It definitely has its own rewards and benefits. We're in a unique position at SN Systems in that our tools are used extensively on all the PlayStation systems so we have a critical role to play within the industry. From getting very early exposure to the development hardware all the way through to the maturing and broadening of the platform, it's essential that we provide developers with what they need.

Working in any aspect of the industry is exciting. At the end of the day, when I see the games on the shop floor, I know I've played a small part in getting them there – not just a few, but lots of them!

What do you think is the biggest misconception people have about your job?
Often games developers aren't seen as 'serious' programmers – that developing games is an extension of a hobby, but not a real job. Although it is a young industry that is still finding its feet, it is still a highly professional and structured industry with many talented individuals.





SN Systems' Tuner tool, now available for PSP and PS3, has long been heavily relied upon by many studios for optimising their game code, no doubt part of Sony's decision to buy SN in 2005

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EA

FACE UP TO THE CHALLENGE



Name: Ian Lambert

Position: Software Engineer

Project: Burnout Paradise

How did you get into games?
I completed my BSc in Computer Science at Warwick and decided to continue in education by doing an MSc in Computer Games Programming but with particular focus on physics. I always wanted to work in games but wanted to keep my options open in case it didn't work out. Fortunately for me – it did! There are massive challenges and working at EA means I have all the resources and support I need to get to grips with those challenges.

Proudest moment:
My name will appear in the credits for Burnout Paradise – I can't wait!

Any advice for graduates wanting to get into games?
The competition out there is tough so try to develop your skills in an area which is lacking in the games industry – physics and audio engineers will always be in demand.

www.jobs.ea.com



MATHIAS GRUNWALDT
LEAD AUDIO DESIGNER
BIZARRE CREATIONS

Profile: Audio designer

Could blowing your own trumpet land you a job?

Overview

Here's a test: pick a modern game, turn the sound off and see whether it makes it easier or harder. Nine times out of ten, it cranks up the difficulty. Today's game audio isn't just packed with atmosphere, it's also full of information, from spatial positioning to status reports. Designing these is an integral part of making the game experience complete, and requires a real mix of technical and creative skills. Modern audio divisions need programmers as well as composers, and may be involved with complex administrative tasks, like managing licensed music tracks or orchestral recording sessions, or with wrangling an extended voice acting cast. Get it right, and you create the only element of a game that can raise goosebumps out of context: few people shiver at a screenshot, but everyone has that bit of game audio that makes their spine tingle. And it remains the only job in the world in which you might get paid to smash up watermelons with baseball bats.

How did you get started in the industry?
I was studying for a music degree when the opportunity to work at Bizarre came up. I was hoping to get a job in the games industry quite a while before that, and had unsuccessfully applied to other positions, mainly music related. The junior sound designer position at Bizarre meant I wasn't going to make music, but being able to finish my degree while working on *PGR2* at the same time just had a unique appeal. The cliché about having been playing games since being a kid and not being able to believe people actually earned a living making them would apply to me as well, although once I got thrown in at the deep end it was a different sensation altogether.

What's a typical day like?
A typical day involves catching up with the day's developments (reading emails, catching up with the team), then focusing on a specific task and gathering sounds, editing, implementing, testing. Sometimes in the early stages of a project we go out to make recordings for ambiences and foley, which is always good fun – unless it's raining. Towards the end of a project more days are spent fixing bugs, and we don't get out much.

What tools do you use?
I use mostly Sound Forge 9, but we have other audio applications like Pro Tools and Nuendo, and various plug-in suites. We use in-house tools for all our implementation and content creation as well, so I spend a lot of time with those. At Bizarre we have outstanding audio facilities; each sound designer gets their own listening room, which have been custom built to professional specs, and all have surround monitoring. When recording, we make use of our recording rig, which includes various microphones, like DPA, Rode and Sennheiser, and Focusrite preamps, as well as a Fostex FR-2, and my personal Sound Devices 722 field recorder.

How has game audio changed over the last few years?
I think the biggest changes in game audio over the last few years have been about more memory and more processing power which means better overall quality. Audio budgets are increasing, which helps when a lot of recordings are necessary and music quality needs to be up there. However, maybe the principles of game audio haven't changed all that much – think of *Defender* and replace all the bleeps with real audio, real screams of people getting lifted into space, big cinematic alien space ship noises, a dramatic score, big explosions and laser fire. You could argue that game audio today fulfils the same role it did 30 years ago, telling the player, 'you're doing well' or 'you suck!' only there's more technology and more room for details these days.

Is audio design the unsung hero of game design?
I think many game designers work primarily in the visual domain, and fail to give effective direction on audio, which means it ends up with the audio designers second guessing what the audio should be like. I guess that's primarily a communication problem that can be dealt with. I think that a good game will always come through, even with substandard audio, but there's no question successful audio design makes a game feel complete.

What are the best and worst aspects of your job?
The most frustrating is when the project you're working on is seeing difficult times – thankfully it hasn't happened to me much – because if you're working on something for two years and suddenly X, Y or Z gets cut then it really feels like they've taken it away from you. The most rewarding aspect is when the game comes together and you fire it up and it blends into one experience. You feel like you're there, and that's when you know it's working.

What advice would you give someone looking to get started as an audio designer?
Get some skills and be honest in your CV, create an outstanding showreel that you can send in to people, and target individual companies. Not all companies have in-house sound designers, even though most of the bigger ones do. Think of it this way: what game do you want to work on? Find out who makes that game and get an interview. Passion goes a very long way in this industry, and the more you can contribute in ideas and hands-on skills, the better your chances.

> "What game do you want to work on? Find out who's making it and get an interview"





***The Club*'s fast pace of play and complex combo structure means that the audio design has to communicate a lot of information, as well as building atmosphere, tension and excitement**

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TONY POVEY
TECHNICAL MANAGER
VOLATILE GAMES
(PART OF BLITZ GAMES)

Profile: Technical director

As teams and projects get bigger, so do the job titles

Overview

On big game projects, simply managing communication is now becoming a big challenge. One side of the problem is dealt with by producers, who work to make sure deadlines are met, and design documents adhered to. But the other side of the equation is technical directors, whose experience as game programmers makes them uniquely able to relay information between the programming teams, and the designers and art teams. The overview that they have enables them to make sure the programming work is going in the direction that it needs to, and the problems or opportunities are identified – and understood – early on. Also important is managing the time and workload of the programming team you supervise, which means you need strong leadership and people skills, as well as being able to identify each team member's particular strength and make sure it's being best used. Part diplomat, part manager, part technical guru, it's becoming an increasingly crucial role.

How did you get started in the videogame industry?

When I got started it was all about showing your talents with a good demo. Back then there weren't any game-specific courses to help you get into the industry. I still think that to this day there is nothing more impressive than a really well polished demo, and you don't even see that many of them. I spent a few months preparing several demos that showed 2D and 3D knowledge along with some real gameplay. After sending these demos off to as many companies as I could find in the back of **Edge** I then got several interviews, including one at Blitz Games. I think my lucky break came when the Oliver brothers [Blitz's founders] saw my 2D top-down driving demo, as this was something they were very familiar with. After being invited for a two-day interview to put me to the test, they offered me a position.





As a technical manager, you won't just be called upon to oversee games such as *Reservoir Dogs* (above), but potentially also on special projects, like Volatile's The Eagle King tech demo (top)

What's a typical day like for you?

Fun… and some hard work too. My job involves so much more than just programming now, although it is always nice to get your hands dirty with some real coding. One of my main goals each day is to make sure that all the programmers, and other staff relying on the programmers, are able to work to their best. It's about keeping an eye on impending problems and helping offer new perspectives and advice on issues that are affecting the team. Having come from a pure programming background I know how attractive it is to put on your earphones and shut the world out. So part of my job is to help programmers achieve this concentration by being available for meetings with designers and artists. Although sometimes it is necessary to pull programmers away from their tasks to get involved in discussions, there are also times when distracting them is not necessary.

> "Having come from a pure programming background I know I tempting it is to put on your earphones and shut the world out"

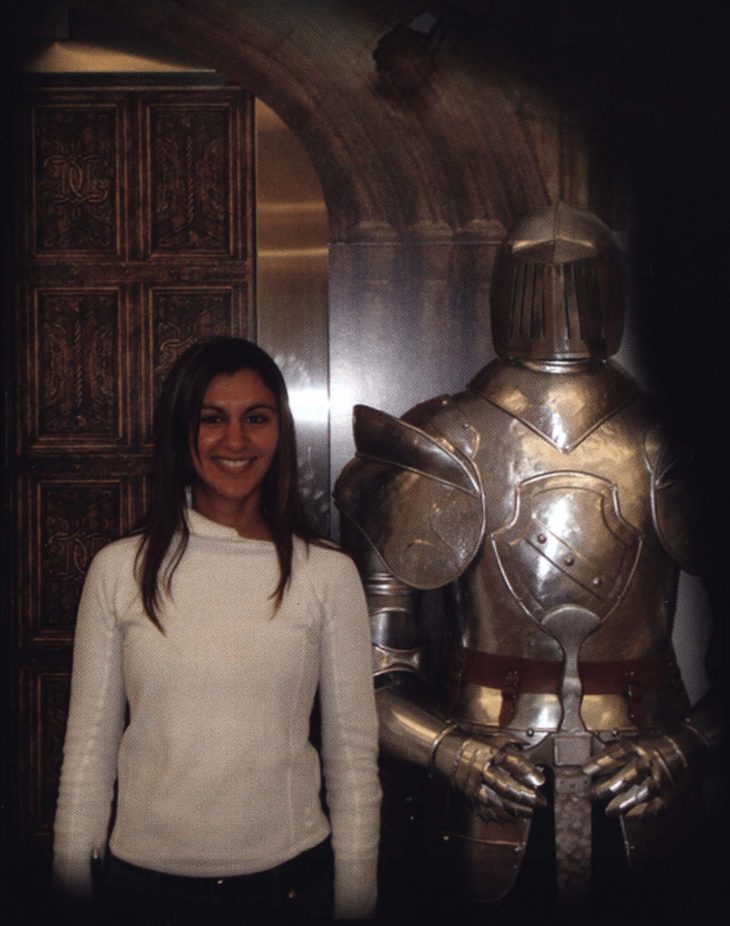
In the old days, programmers – so the stereotype goes – could get away with being eccentric, loner geeks. How important are things like communication skills and managerial experience for technical staff these days?

I'm sure you're wrong – I can't believe we were ever thought of as eccentric, loner geeks! But assuming you're correct, then yes, things are very different today. I don't think a team consisting of isolated programmers with little communication or management would be able to succeed in this world of increasingly complex games. Saying that, though, there are still many programmers who are deeply focused on the programming, and there is nothing wrong with this. The important thing is that there is a structure in place that keeps the communication flowing. In part this is where my job comes in: by keeping an eye on all technical aspects of the game it allows me to help pass on information where necessary. Something that people must respect is that programming requires concentration, and not just for a few minutes at a time. For this reason programmers often need to be able to switch off from the outside world for long periods of time in order to get the job done. In order to avoid communication problems with the rest of the development staff there needs to be someone to manage this, and that is where a technical manager comes in. A technical manager at Blitz Games is still hands-on to a degree, but also agrees to take on management responsibilities. This mix of management and programming skills has become a necessary part of game development, as programming teams often enter double figures. With that number of programmers working on a single project someone needs to make sure everyone is pulling in the same direction.

What language and tools would you suggest someone looking to get a start in the videogame industry should familiarise themselves with?

At the moment the best place to start is C++ within Visual Studio.NET. This is where the majority of our work is done and is really a must for most programmers who want to get into games programming. That being said, though, we are increasingly looking at talents outside of this area, in order to make sure we don't miss any real physics, AI or maths talents. Because the demands of game programming are becoming so great, sometimes it is better to find a great physics or maths talent and then make a programmer out of them, rather than the other way around.

THE ONLY LIMITS ARE YOUR LIMITS.



'I completed my degree in Computer Arts at the University of Abertay in 2006. I'd always been interested in art in computer games so decided to enter the Dare to be Digital competition where I worked in a team of 5 as an artist and animator. The experience gave me an insight into how games were made and it was valuable experience. When I graduated I applied to Electronic Arts and have just finished working on Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix. Since joining EA I've learnt a huge amount from the other artists who have worked on some of the biggest films in Hollywood as well as critically acclaimed games. Combined with the extensive training available, I know I've furthered my career extensively over the past year. EA is a fun and lively place to work and I would recommend anyone wanting to work in the games industry to take a look at what they're up to!'

Amrita Bharij – Interface Designer

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SAM BRACE
PR MANAGER
CAPCOM

Profile: Public relations manager

Could you tell it like it isn't for a living?

Overview

The theory used to be that the only things a PR needed to be able to use was a company credit card and a packet of Rennie. These days their skillset needs to run to spreadsheets, code burning and international visa requirements. While the core of the job remains showing games to journalists – a task which is still often followed by a trip to the pub – the day-to-day life of a PR also includes preparing media plans and drawing up reports, supplying screenshots, assets and new builds of games, organising events and arranging travel and accommodation details for press trips, and chaperoning developers through entire days of interview junkets. Your crisis management skills will also need to be top-notch, for those rare occasions when a journalist goes AWOL on a visit to Krakow, or an unexpectedly delayed game leaves you facing the wrath of an editor who had reserved pages for it and is now days away from deadline. All of which means you may still need that packet of Rennie.

How did you get your start in the videogame industry?
I was lucky, really – I had no intention of being a PR manager or working in the games industry as I was just out of university with a BA in Music Technology, but needed a job to help control spiralling debts. A friend of mine was doing some web design for Rocket Media, a PR agency who used to do PR for Konami and Codemasters, and Kirsty, the boss, asked him if he knew anyone who enjoys playing games and drinking. I immediately sprang to mind. I went for an interview looking hideously dishevelled after a massive night out, as I recall. I don't think I had even been to bed. I didn't expect to get the job in a million years but I made them laugh and I think I must have been exactly what they were looking for.



Franchises like *Devil May Cry* can be the easiest and hardest jobs for PRs. Easy, because they're familiar, hard because you need to make sure the fourth instalment generates as much excitement as the first

> "Make sure you've got a high booze tolerance. Don't be sick on your first night"

What's a typical day like for you?
It's a heady mix of emails, phone calls and creative bullshitting to my bosses with the odd lunch or gym session thrown in. I like to get out for drinks after work too, which is not as often as I'd like these days, unfortunately.

How has PR changed in the last few years – has the rise of things like developer blogs, game-specific forums and downloadable console demos changed your job much?
PR is a constantly evolving job but I don't think things have changed that much over the last few years. Online coverage is much more at the forefront of my thinking these days. I used to be almost totally focused on magazines, but it's a much more balanced state of affairs now.

What's the biggest misconception people have about the job of a PR manager?
All my mates constantly saying they can't believe I get paid to play games and get drunk. This is really not the case at all. A very small part of the job involves playing games the rest is hardcore chatting, negotiating, writing and emailing. It's fast-paced constantly changing and tough. I don't think many people realise how hard PRs work. Especially my boss.

What's more important for your job – to be super-organised, or to be super-sociable?
I think being organised is the key to good PR. Unfortunately I'm rubbish at organisation; however, my PR skills remain excellent as my brain works approximately 25% faster than the average human due to the 1,000 cups of coffee I drink every day. Seriously, though, I don't think you have to be 'super' anything. I'm as social as I'm comfortable with and I'm relatively organised. If you know your business, that should be more than enough.

What's the best preparation for someone who's looking to get started in videogame PR?
Make sure you've got a high booze tolerance. Don't be sick on your first night out with journalists. Be pro-active in everything you do. Make sure you've got friends in the right place. Be lucky.

What's the most frustrating aspect of your job?
Game slippage and unpredictable Capcom Japan R&D antics. I think everyone has the same issues in this industry, to be honest.

And the most rewarding?
Travelling all over the world to the strangest yet most fun places you can imagine, from Tokyo to Las Vegas, and partying with the finest people you could ever hope to meet. On a day-to-day basis getting front covers and 10/10s are nice. I have a lovely wall of framed front covers behind my desk. My OPS2 *Resident Evil 4* cover is my favourite – closely followed by the **Edge** one, of course!





***Resident Evil 5* is the perfect example of the kind of keenly antcipated but long-delayed games that can make PR a challenging job**

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MICHAEL BURNHAM
HEAD OF PRODUCTION
REBELLION

Profile: Producer

When milestones maketh the man

How did you come to be in your current job?
Back in the '90s I joined Bullfrog, which was staffed to the tune of around 40 developers at the time. I specialised in tuning PCs to talk efficiently to the early PSX and Saturn development hardware and getting this new OS called Windows 95 to work well as a development platform for folk who were much happier with a command prompt.

As time went on I managed various small projects while the studio grew in size to 180 staff and turned into the main EA UK development studio. Around 1999 Mucky Foot gave me a great opportunity to join them as an in-house producer. One of my personal highs during my time with them was getting *StarTopia* out to high critical acclaim, another was getting Mucky Foot North (Newcastle) up and running successfully. It was around this time that I heard Jason Kingsley (Rebellion's CEO) talk about the importance of developers keeping hold of their IP at an IGDA event. When, a couple of years later, I had the chance of joining Rebellion I jumped at it.

What's a typical day like?
With multiple games on the go at any one time my job is to liaise with the projects' individual producers and leads on our side and the producers on the publishers' side. Any one day may include a lead or a producer asking for more resources in a particular area, working with an external funding party – such as Film Finance Inc – a publisher passing on an urgent request for 20 screenshots, milestone preparations and testing on one product and milestone recovery on another. Mixed in with the direct production work my role also covers encouraging cross-studio communication, managing studio staffing levels, and the bane of my life: studio seating plans.

Producer is sometimes thought of as being a good entry point into the videogame industry. Is it more valuable to have transferrable project/team management skills, or to have risen through the ranks of game development?
I think there are two distinct producer roles that can be separated quite readily. One role is based on project management and the other is based on quality. Smaller teams may have one producer to cover both and as teams grow assistant producers or project leads may be introduced to help manage production tasks or ensure the game hits the highest quality bar possible.

Folk from outside the games industry can absolutely deliver as either sort of producer if their attitude to listening to the skilled lead staff is correct. In most cases a producer should be removing barriers from the game teams, while also directing them to clear achievable goals, which are well communicated to the publisher in advance. This industry still sees an awful lot of producers that think they are the project's lead designer, artist, programmer, etc, and that just doesn't work for the huge teams we now need.

What would be your advice for someone looking to get started in game production?
Ideally you need to have been successful in two sorts of experience to get started in games production. First is positive team management experience. This could be 'producing' a team while working in another profession, or running a provably active university games club or producing and distributing a collaboratively made game mod. Expect tough interview questions on the above because understanding, and caring about, how people work is key to the production job.

Second is an idea of what working inside a development studio actually entails. I have conducted many production interviews where would-be producers proved they did not have a clue as to what the daily role of a producer would entail. A month's work experience or a few months' internship really pays dividends in filling in the picture as far as daily development life goes.

How has the role changed over the last few years?
While there are still publishers who hire an expert development team and then grind them up by wanting to design every game element, clear every pixel of art, and even discuss the coding input and output of certain routines, publishers as a whole are getting much better at deciding what they want from a development team up front and then tracking progress. Clarifying this tracking of progress is the real change over the years as complex game features may take months to realise into truly accessible form. Personally I encourage clear, detailed, milestone delivery documents laying out what features will be delivered and at what level of completion they should be reviewed at.

Overview

Producers are seen as the lynchpin of modern videogames. Standing at the crossroads of the team's ambitions for the game, the publisher's commercial aspirations, and the studio's limited resources, they're in charge of keeping everyone happy and ensuring the game can be delivered on time, within budget, and to the quality that was intended. And, if that wasn't tough enough, they're in charge of managing the situation when it becomes clear that, for whatever reasons, the game won't be on time, has already exceeded budget and isn't anywhere near the quality everyone was hoping for. The best producers are born diplomats and organisers, but are tough enough to know that the best way to make everyone happy in the long run might be to make yourself enormously unpopular in the short term. Good game knowledge is also an advantage, assuming you've also got the self control to avoid sticking your oar in. But do it right and there's no better preparation for one day running your own studio.

"This industry still sees an awful lot of producers that think they are the project's lead designer, artist, programmer, etc"



Games like Rebellion's *Star Wars Battlefront: Renegade Squadron* can test a producer to the full, as they bring in new worries like licence limitations and preserving franchise continuity



Complex online elements, as in *Renegade Squadron*, can add to a producer's workload



FEARGUS CARROLL
PROJECT LEAD
(LUCASFILM ANIMATION COMPANY SINGAPORE BV)

Making the jump

As the videogame industry gets more global, there are more and more reasons to widen your job search overseas, whether you're looking for a better quality of life, a better quality of project, or just a better quality of weather. It may seem a daunting prospect, but as it becomes more common for people to swap continents, it's also becoming easier. Most companies offer supportive relocation services, so you won't be dealing with all the stressful practicalities on your own. And, as English is increasingly becoming the lingua franca of game development, you won't necessarily be facing a huge communications gap with your new colleagues. It's worth considering, because it may also be something you're called upon to do from within a UK- or US-based game giant. As more technology is shared between projects, and more international studios get snapped up, it's increasingly common for employees to be asked to go overseas to help supervise or set up a new project.

Interview: A developer abroad

Could the wider world hold your dream job?

How did you get started in the videogame industry?

Those currently seeking their first job in this industry will be irritated to learn it was a complete fluke. I applied for a production job on a magazine, which turned out to be Games-X. I shortly became production editor, it lasted exactly one year and that was way back in 1991. After that, short spells in computer graphics – anyone remember 3D Studio 1.0? – and Mickey Mouse programming I became QA manager at Psygnosis about one year before the PlayStation launch.

What made you decide to leave the UK?

I reached a crossroads in my career. For years I'd had a desire to work abroad, with the assumption of that being in the US. Having worked away from my family for many years I just spent 12 months back at home, which was great, and then the closure of the EA NW Studio forced a decision on me which was to leave the family again (not good), all of us move down to London (not good), or really move. My wife and I being confirmed northerners made it an easy choice.

I'd been talking to LucasArts about the Singapore role for a while, in a very general way. I was also looking at Vancouver and Scandinavia, but the more I talked to LucasArts, the more I got hooked. Working on a Star Wars-related project, the position of project lead and moving to south-east Asia was very appealing. As someone rather fantastically once said: 'The train of life does not stop at your station every day, so when it does, you need to leap on'. We leaped.

How challenging has it been adjusting to your new life?

Singapore is often referred to as Asia-Lite – on the surface it easily resembles London or New York, with efficient infrastructure, banking, public transport, healthcare, education, and more shopping than any one person could handle. However, you don't need to dig too deep to run into Asia proper – the culture is very much a blend of predominantly Chinese, Indian and Malay, with customer service, business transactions, public holidays and society in general all reflecting that. It's one of the safest countries in the world, but at the same time driving is an 'experience'. Bank cheques are cashed overnight but internet shopping is virtually nonexistent. It takes about six hours to realise that you're definitely in Asia.

Work, on the other hand, is very familiar. Making games is making games wherever you do it. Probably the two biggest challenges we face are recruiting senior talent, since the games industry is very much in its infancy over here, and the fact that we are on a 14-hour time difference from the head office in San Francisco. That said, recruitment is going strong and we have almost 30 different nationalities now working here, and every working day has a two- to three-hour overlap with the States, so these are challenges with solutions.

What's surprised you most about the change?

The talent and enthusiasm to be found in Singapore, and south-east Asia, for making games. I'm still forming what is a rookie team, albeit with experienced guys in it, yet already the early preproduction images I'm seeing onscreen easily match anything currently out there today. That's an easy statement to make, but I'm fully aware of what I'm claiming. If I could show you what we're doing, you'd agree. On a personal note it would be how quickly the family have settled into the ex-pat life – it's easy to underestimate the adaptability of kids. Oh, and bright sunshine and outdoor dining every day is actually really great.

Should developers expect to have to relocate nowadays?

I think 'expect' is an emotive word – it almost implies coercion. No, the increasingly global nature of our industry gives anyone the opportunity to work abroad, should they want it. And for what it's worth, I think every developer should take the opportunity at some point in their career.

> "There's always at least two good reasons not to move abroad. But then there's always two good reasons not to do anything"

Does the UK videogame industry look different from your new perspective?

Yes, actually. Now that all my news comes from the net, most of what I read is about US or occasionally Japanese developers. The rest of the world could be forgiven for thinking that the UK had a few key studios and not much more – I'm thinking Bizarre, Rare, FRD, Evolution, Traveller's [Tales]* – whereas I obviously know there are far more great teams out there: Climax, Swordfish, Codemasters, Juice, Eurocom, Revolution, etc.

What advice would you give to someone considering relocating?

There's always at least two good reasons not to move abroad. But then there's always two good reasons not to do anything. Yes, it will throw up challenges you didn't anticipate. Yes, it's a big deal. But the only *real* thing stopping anyone is themselves. Years ago, moving abroad was a no-turning-back life-changing event, but not any more. The world is a small place – Skype and cheap air travel see to that. It's not like you'll never see family, friends or Blighty ever again. Don't think too much about it, just jump in. If I can move with a wife, three kids and three big dogs, anyone can.







Lucasfilm Animation's international talent pool in Singapore is currently developing assets for use in LucasArts' new title *The Force Unleashed*, which sits between episodes III and IV and promises new revelations about the Star Wars galaxy

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Behind every great games system...



...there is a great tools company





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Sony Computer Entertainment Group



MATTHEW JEFFERY
HEAD OF EUROPEAN STUDIO RECRUITMENT
EA

The talent search

So, having had a chance over the preceding pages to sample a range of jobs that the videogame industry offers, how do you get started once you've picked one that's right for you? Over the next few pages we talk to people with key insights into the two main ways people find their industry jobs. First, Matthew Jeffery, EA's head of European studio recruitment, talks about his perceptions of which roles are most in demand, whether a degree is an essential requirement for applying for a job in games, and whether or not those who have already taken a different professional path have blown their chance of getting into the videogame industry. Over the page, we get the perspective of Stig Strand and Peter Leonard, game specialists with the recruitment agency Amiqus, who give their take on whether or not prospective developers need to be willing to work abroad, and what basic mistakes to avoid making as you take your first step toward getting into games.

Interview: The in-house recruiter

EA's Matthew Jeffery on how to get hired

How buoyant is gaming recruitment right now? Is the surge caused by the recent arrival of the wave of new hardware finally starting to slow down?

Games is the fastest growing media industry. Recruitment across the entertainment sector, be it film, TV, music or games, is very buoyant and we are all fighting over a small, experienced talent pool of creatives. There has never been a better time to get into games. We are heading into a golden age of gaming.

What's great is that the new-generation consoles have brought new power to games developers. I remember back when a career in film was seen as the holy grail. It was hard to tempt across talent from the film industry because there was a recognition that consoles had heavy restraints on graphical capability and memory storage. Fast forward to today and talent from film recognises the exciting times that games are entering with the power of PS3 and 360. Films are restricted by providing viewers with a linear experience controlled by what the film director wants the viewer to see. Gaming provides the chance to create online worlds in which players can play in realtime and control what they want to do. This is revolutionary for people working in film.

What's also great for gaming is that the industry is seeking to broaden its base to reach out to new gamers. Nintendo followed a different strategy to Sony and Microsoft, and instead of focusing on processing power went down the route of how to immerse players into deep gameplay experiences, and this was achieved through an innovative controller. The Wii has brought gaming to new audiences. The success of the Wii in bringing gaming to non-traditional audiences is having a large effect across the industry as all developers now look how to segment the gaming marketplace and target games to key audiences, the hardcore gamers, and more importantly casual gamers, which is the area where the industry can continue to grow most. That is a great step forward for our industry and the reason why lots of new people want to work in gaming.

> "Of the past 350 hires we've made, only two have been entry-level game designers and they didn't come from a game design degree"

Which roles would you say are the easiest to get a start in at the moment, and which would you class as being the most fiercely competitive?

Highly talented programmers are the most sought after. This has been the case for some time. There is a real shortage of talent in programming, therefore if you are a great programmer you are likely to be not only snapped up in the games industry but fought over by several games companies. Programming is broken down into different specialities within gaming, including gameplay, AI, audio, games, online, frontend and tools, to name but a few.

In terms of artists, we are always looking for world-class animators, modellers, concept artists. Key to an artist's showreel is demonstrating that they are not only technically competent but have a broad range of differing art styles and can convey creativity. Critically animators, for example, must now not only have a great showreel but demonstrate the ability to tell a story through their animation and create emotionally believable characters. In terms of games designers, there are very few entry-level positions to get into the industry, so this is the hardest area for those looking to get into the games industry.

Do you think there's an argument that it's best for newcomers to start on more modest projects, with small teams, which give them an opportunity to become familiar with all aspects of the game production process, rather than starting out on a large-scale, 100-plus team-member game?

Great talent will always rise to the top, be it on a larger games team or a smaller team. Key is having people who are super-passionate, believe in themselves, willing to challenge the status quo, speak their mind and be highly creative/innovative. That's critical for EA and the games industry in ensuring that game team sizes do not balloon up too high. This is why the industry is seeking to maintain core game team sizes as this creates the conditions for creativity. This is driven by using a mix of freelance contractors and outsourcing work. In EA there is a mix of game team sizes. Critical to this is the style of game



EA is one of the biggest game employers in Europe, and Matthew Jeffery feels it relies on new graduates and non-game professionals as well as on the existing pool of game developers

EA™
IN ASSOCIATION WITH EA



being worked on. Games in development for Xbox Live Marketplace or PlayStation Network could be as small as ten people working on a game for three months. That suits some people's style and provides creative leadership opportunities. The larger games obviously require more people. What better way to start at a company, though, than working on a AAA hit game like *Harry Potter* or *Burnout* that will be played by millions of people? That looks great on your credit list and makes you highly marketable in the games industry.

What's the best way to break the 'you need experience to get experience' vicious circle? Is it best to do a game-specific course or work on your own projects or portfolio privately?
You don't need commercial experience to get into games. EA is passionate about graduates but there are other routes into gaming. Quality assurance, QA, tests our games for bugs and suggests gameplay enhancements. We often find that QA is home to great talent in game design, production or project management. It is also a very positive message to convey that some of the best creative leaders in the industry don't have university degrees and their sheer talent took them to the top of the pile. Alex Ward, creative director of Criterion Games, creator of the genre-defining *Burnout* and *Black* franchises, rose to the top from a QA background. Other creative leaders with no degree include Will Wright, creator of *The Sims*, Cliffy B of *Gears Of War*, the film director Peter Jackson, John Woo, director of Face/Off and Hard Boiled, and the legendary Quentin Tarantino, director of Reservoir Dogs and Pulp Fiction amongst others. The message is, if you are talented and super-passionate, don't let anything get in the way of fulfilling your talent. Drive and talent can take you straight to the top.

How valuable do you find game design courses – rather than game specific programming or art/animation courses – to be?
There has been a recent proliferation of games degrees and games design courses. This is a huge concern for EA. We prefer that game design programs be done as a master's level specialisation. There are very few opportunities for entry-level game designers anywhere in the industry and the best ones usually have a diverse background of education and project development. Of the past 350 hires we made at the UK studio, only two were entry-level designers and they didn't come from a games design degree. This compares to 33 per cent of the 350 hires being graduate entrants in programming and art.

Games degrees are the latest fashion accessory with universities clamouring to set up courses. I always ask this question of academics, rushing to set up a games course: 'If your student cannot get a job in the games industry, where will they be able to work?' Games degrees are not readily transferable outside of this sector. Graduating with a classical degree opens up more opportunities outside of the games industry. Students need to really think seriously about their choice of degree. Right now, the biggest needs of the industry are for programmers, technical artists, and computer graphic artists. These require depth in the specialisation area.

There's been a lot of speculation around the fact that the number of game-related course graduates will soon far exceed the number of jobs available. What can new graduates do to make sure they stand out from a highly competitive field?
Any applicant to EA should do anything they can to make themselves stand out, including creating their own games, taking on research projects outside of their schooling, and getting involved more actively in the gaming community at large. The games industry is a great place to build a career in entertainment. If you want to do this, you should work hard academically to build your toolbox of technology and artistic abilities and take a chance on internship opportunities while in university.

Read as much as you can about the industry through websites, trade publications and academic journals to learn what you can from the industry. Don't just read about games, read about the business, the industry, and other forms of creative media. Talk to as many people already in the industry as possible. If you can get to GDC, London Games Week or another technology or art related conference somewhere near where you live, do it. If you're looking for work, now is not the time to be shy!

EA has made its commitment to new graduates very clear, but how easy is it for established professionals in non-gaming fields – say, animators or programmers – to move across into games?
The experienced talent pool in gaming is shrinking. The industry can only play recruitment chess for a limited time before talent starvation kicks in. Graduates are one salvation to the talent shortage. The other is for the industry to start hiring from outside of the sector. EA is hiring staff from a whole host of different industries including the film, TV, media, advertising, mobile, IT, FMCG [fast moving consumer goods], finance and the public sector. The public sector has great programmers involved in defence and creating AI for missile targeting systems. Banking has a host of great programmers, but while they are well paid, we often find they are bored with their work and feel liberated coming into games. It doesn't matter what industry someone works in, they could be a valuable asset to gaming and bring new ideas into the industry. EA looks for a passion for excellence in all they do.

Every employee has to have a similar set of core competencies – passion for games, individual excellence and achievement, creativity, team-oriented, and hard working. That is the recipe for success.

How competitive do employers have to be nowadays in terms of working conditions and quality of life issues?
Quality of life and work-life balance is critical to not only a person's happiness at work but their level of creativity. Any industry which is anchored on project deadlines, be it film, TV, advertising, gaming or the IT industry, will face challenges. Crunch is in many ways inevitable as teams are perfectionists and want to be associated with a great AAA game and therefore, as the release date nears, they use this time for polishing and squeezing in extra content which could make the difference between a hit game and a flop.

But as a company we have also looked at minimising the crunch period. This has involved ensuring there is an effective preproduction process whereby game design is locked down early in the process and then project managers look to schedule the project fairly and spread the workload. Quality of life is an important issue for EA.



PETER LEONARD
LEAD GAMES CONSULTANT



STIG STRAND
HEAD OF GAMES RECRUITMENT

Interview: Recruitment agents

Stig Strand and Peter Leonard of Amiqus talk tactics for landing your dream job

How buoyant is gaming recruitment at the moment? Is the surge caused by the arrival of Xbox 360, PlayStation 3 and Wii finally starting to slow down?
The recruitment sector for games is at an all-time high. The demand for staff is continuing and the increase in other development platforms such as mobile and handheld has inflated the demand for talent even further. Larger publishers and developers are investing in DS, PSP and Wii platforms due to the increase in lifestyle gaming target audiences which means that this latest surge is not going to slow down in the near future.

Next-gen platforms allow better visual graphics, advanced AI, increased detail and more complexity in the games which leads to the need for more production assets for each game which have to be managed. This increase in assets has led to a necessary expansion in team sizes, creating greater demand for additional headcount across all skillsets.

What roles and skills are currently most in demand?
C++ programming skills are still in particular demand not only in the games industry but also across other technology sectors. Generally demand is currently outstripping supply in this area. Candidates who have completed traditional degrees or the equivalent in computer science, maths or physics are often favoured because they typically have the in-depth knowledge of the programming languages which employers look for. If candidates are not purely language focused employers ideally look for strong A-level results and alternative qualifications with transferable skills.

Other roles that are becoming more frequently available at entry level are assistant/associate producers and project managers due to the inflated team sizes which have increased the need for management overhead.

> "For the more creative disciplines the most successful way to break into the industry is to create examples of your own work"

Should people looking to get a start in the videogame industry be looking abroad as well as in the UK?
The larger developers and publishers have global studio locations and have established graduate schemes to attract and manage new talent into the industry – EA are a good example of this. There are, however, a considerable number of opportunities for entry level people in the UK to work on AAA games and therefore there is definitely no necessity to look abroad for the start to an exciting career.

How competitive do employers have to be nowadays in terms of working conditions and quality of life issues?
All employers nowadays have to be more competitive than ever before. Talented individuals from entry level to experienced often secure multiple offers due to the current demand levels. With the market growing, studio environments are being aligned more closely with other, more mature technology-driven industry sectors. For example, to enable employees to balance their work and personal life, studios are now offering flexitime and flexible working hours in line with recent legislation.

On-site facilities more often include relaxed places to eat with subsidised meals and healthy options, 'chillout' zones and creative facilities to encourage a productive and adaptable working environment. The candidate experience throughout the recruitment process is also critical to the choices made by all applicants; first impressions are paramount.

What's the best way to break the 'you need experience to get experience' vicious circle? Is it best to do a course, or to work at preparing your own projects or portfolio privately?
Dependent on the career path you are targeting, both of these options should be considered. For more technical roles such as programming, a course would give you relevant skills to take to the studio. However, for the more creative disciplines the most successful way to break into the industry is to create examples of your own work independently, targeting the studios you are interested in and creating examples that are linked to their specific product portfolio.

Studios will always look at talented graduates or candidates with equivalent experience; however, hiring managers need to see focused examples of your creative ability that are instantly engaging.

Now that there are so many courses available, what's the best way for new graduates to make themselves stand out from the crowd in a highly competitive job market?
Having a portfolio which illustrates your best work using the latest techniques and skills, demonstrating creativity, knowledge and flair will ensure you stand out from the crowd. This portfolio should be specific, focused, and relevant to current platforms and studio products.

What's the one thing you wished more people realised, or prepared for, before trying to move into a job in the videogame industry?
It is surprisingly common for a large number of newcomers to express a huge passion to break into games, but have no in-depth understanding of how a studio works, or the day-to-day tasks of individual roles. We would suggest that entry-level candidates should utilise the resources available to them within specialist recruitment companies to assist them in understanding more fully the studio functions, how they interact and the career path each area provides. Ultimately this will enable candidates to have a specific career goal which can then be targeted for success.



Improved facilities, like these at EA's Chertsey base, and perks like free snacks help create a better working environment, and play their part alongside more important issues like flexitime and minimised crunch

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amiqus games

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- **Project Managers & Producers**
- **Artists - 2D, 3D & GUI**
- **Designers**
- **Test and QA**

"Amiqus consultants are totally professional and efficient at finding entry level staff jobs. They gave me excellent advice and worked hard to get me a good role and the best offer possible. Amiqus consultants are the best recruiters in this field and are definitely a first port of call if you are looking for a job in the computer games industry."
Richard Brooks, Kuju
Staff Programmer



t: +44 (0)1925 25 25 88 **e: gamesteam@amiqus.com** www.amiqus.com

Stig Strand - Head of Games Recruitment | Peter Leonard - Lead Games Consultant | Louise Beattie - Games Consultant
Anthea Curwen - Sales & Marketing Consultant | Stan Wilson - Games Consultant | Liz Prince - Business Development Manager



Courses and training

Everyone always told you learning was supposed to be fun

Many of us spent our school days daydreaming about gaming. What could be better than trading in a dusty, dreary classroom for the digital excitement waiting at home? But now, what's waiting for you in the classroom *is* that digital excitement, as the explosion of gaming related courses takes campuses by storm. Whether you're desperate to learn to code, eager to translate your sketches to fully rendered perfection, fascinated by animation, determined to design the best RPG ever made or convinced you have the managerial skills to meet the complex task of getting a game finished, there's a qualification waiting for you.

So what are you waiting for? Well, if you're smart, you're waiting to do a bit of digging on the courses and institutions you're looking at. Not all courses are taken seriously by those already in the videogame industry – in some cases that's old-fashioned prejudice, in some cases it's well-informed scepticism. So be sure you quiz prospective institutions on how much luck previous graduates have had getting jobs, and ask if they have good links to local industry businesses. It may be worth considering courses that offer a sandwich year placement, or internship possibilities, so you can be certain of finishing your degree with both an academic grounding and hands-on experience, enabling you to answer any reservations prospective employers might have.

Another essential thing to consider is what value your degree will have if you decide you don't want the videogame industry, or if the industry decides it doesn't want you. Is it worth doing a game-specific coding course if a general one will give you as good an overall grounding, but get you taken more seriously in the wider world? Are you ready to mount a credible defence of your game design qualification when you've decided to move on and try and be a civil servant instead? The great thing about the industry is that thanks to things like with everything from modding to machinima, XNA Studio to RPG Maker, there's lots of opportunity to gain experience and credibility in your spare time, to sit alongside a more conventional degree.

But if you're certain that games are where you're going, then you've never had a better choice than the one outlined over the next few pages. Throughout the UK, and all over the world, there's a huge range of diverse, demanding and stimulating courses to prepare you for every aspect of the videogame industry. And, yes, if you do sign up, then there will come that golden moment when you sit back, pick up the joypad, and say to your complaining spouse, sibling or flatmate: "But it's *homework*."



XI KHALISAH LIU
MSC CREATIVE GAMES
UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD

Profile: Student

They always said playing was a kind of learning

What made you decide to follow a gaming-related course?

I did fashion design as a first degree course. Even though I have always had passion for animation and character design I didn't used to be a gamer. I only started playing videogames when *Grandia II* came out. Tetsuya Nomura is my idol, and I have always dreamed of pursuing a career like Tetsuya did with his; this is one reason why I decided to apply to the Creative Games Masters programme rather than a fashion related course. I think sometimes fashion design can be cruel when it's too close to reality; however, it can also put a piece of fantasy into a designer's mind. But a game is surreal, beautiful, and in my mind this is how art should be. I decided to relate my fashion design ambitions to games and maybe bring fashion into the fantasy game world, to let people experience fashion from my point of view by using videogames as a tool.

How did those around you respond to your decision?

When I first choose this game course, everybody thought it was the wrong decision because it would lead nowhere in my career. Throughout my higher educational life I have always been preparing to be a fashion designer and had done work experience in the fashion industry internationally and in the UK, so one of my coursemates said to me: 'Oh my God! You are so random!' when she found out I was going on a games course. People say: 'You're so weird!' I take this as a compliment – even a drive to carry out my decision. I would say I have definitely made the right decision. I have always felt that the fashion industry is too realistic to showcase my talent. I want something that is more surreal, so I can dream my wildest dreams.



Creative Games can include projects like PlastiCity, which lets players reshape Bradford

Can you explain a little about how your course is structured?

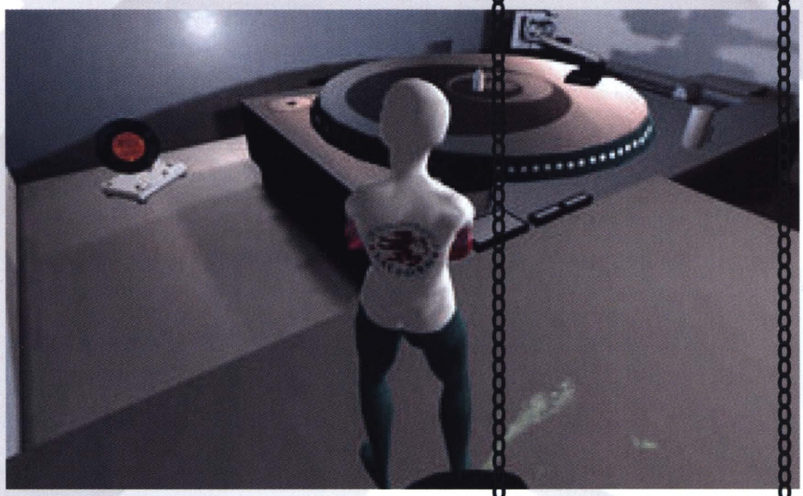
We have basic introductory modules into the history of games, games analysis and the Unreal Editor. Next year there will be a *Second Life* module as well. Then there are applied modules on games for museums, exhibitions and the heritage sector or games for architects and urban planners. Finally we have to do a major project proposal and the final project, which allows us to develop a full game.

What is a typical day like for you?

A typical day would be to have a deadline at the end of the week and another one the following! I'll get up, have a cup of coffee, sit by my computer and start fiddling around with my project. Sometimes I forget eating or drinking until the next morning. But I felt happy to see my baby was finally working – it's an achievement. It brings me back to my childhood days, the times when we made little toys – when it's finally made, I could see the achievements right there and then.

What do you find most enjoyable about your course?

Learning to create a game; it's the experience of really getting hands-on that fascinates me. Also learning about how the industry works is very important.



University courses can be a good opportunity to study the interplay between games and other art forms, like in this 'postvinyl' project

What would be your advice to someone currently considering what course and institution to choose for their degree? What should they be looking for?

My advice would be to prepare for the course by getting some insight into computer coding. Anybody who wants to get on the course must already have a pretty good idea about videogames and also a few thoughts about how you could use them for innovative purposes.

Are you optimistic about the employment situation you'll face when you graduate?

Any industry is pretty competitive. Coming from the fashion industry, I know that. I am willing to pursue a career in the videogames industry. I know it's going to be hard, because I don't have the working experience yet, but I believe in myself, and this course has showed me the positive and energetic side of the industry, and I think, being an energetic person, I will just fit in perfectly.

> "It brings me back to my childhood days, the times when we made little toys. I can see the achievements right there and then"

Overview

Game-related courses have split into four distinct categories over the last few years. Most straightforward are the programming courses, followed by those for art and animation. The best of these are excellent preparation for the videogame industry, and teach transferable skills. Next are game design courses, which are often interconnected with art and programming tracks, so students can team up to make complete games. These are regarded with less confidence within the industry, and you'll need to vet courses carefully to make sure they're rigorous and flexible. Finally there are the art-skewed courses, which put games in a cultural continuum with literature, film, music and other creative undertakings. These courses can be fascinating, but you'll need a clear plan for how to translate these insights into job prospects. Newer on the block are a range of production and business-focused game courses, which are sure to prove popular with students.

UK course listing 2008

Game courses from a selection of universities and colleges

UNIVERSITY OF ABERTAY DUNDEE

Bell Street, Dundee, DD1 1HG

01382 308080

sro@abertay.ac.uk

www.abertay.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES TECHNOLOGY

Four years full-time — Hon BSc

COMPUTING (GAME DEVELOPMENT)

Four years full-time — Hon BSc

GAME PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

Four years full-time — Hon BA

THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES, ABERYSTWYTH

Old College, King Street, Aberystwyth,

Ceredigion, SY23 2AX

01970 622021

ug-admissions@aber.ac.uk

www.aber.ac.uk

COMPUTER GRAPHICS, VISION AND GAMES

Three years FT/ four years sandwich — Hon BSc

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

Bishop Hall Lane, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1SQ

0845 271 3333

answers@anglia.ac.uk

www.anglia.ac.uk

COMPUTER AIDED VISUALISATION

Three years full-time — Hon BSc

COMPUTER GAMES AND VISUAL EFFECTS

Three years full-time — Hon BA

UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

Park Square, Luton, Beds, LU1 3JU

01582 489286

admissions@beds.ac.uk

www.beds.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES DEVELOPMENT

Three years full-time — Hon BA

BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE

Ashfield Road, Bispham, Blackpool, Lancs, FY2

0HB

01253 504346

admissions@blackpool.ac.uk

www.blackpool.ac.uk

GAME DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Two years full-time — Fdg FdSc

THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLTON

Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5AB

01204 900600

enquiries@bolton.ac.uk

www.bolton.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

Two to four years full-time — HND/Hon Bsc

GAMES ART

Three years full-time — Hon BA

GAMES DESIGN

Two to four years full-time — HND/Hon BSc

BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY

Talbot Campus, Fern Barrow, Poole, Dorset,

BH12 5BB

01202 524111

www.bournemouth.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES

Three years full-time — Hon BA

ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY

Three years FT/ four years sandwich — Hon BSc

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD

Richmond Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire,

BD7 1DP

DESIGN FOR COMPUTER GAMES

Three years full-time — Hon BA

INTERACTIVE SYSTEMS AND VIDEO GAMES DESIGN

Three years full-time — Hon BSc

BRADFORD COLLEGE (LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY)

Great Horton Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire

BD7 1AY

01274 433333

admissions@bradfordcollege.ac.uk

www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk

GAMES TECHNOLOGY

2 years full-time — Fdg FdSc

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND, BRISTOL

Frenchay Campus, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol,

BS16 1QY

0117 328 3333

admissions@uwe.ac.uk

www.uwe.ac.uk

GAMES TECHNOLOGY

Three years FT/four years sandwich — Hon BSc

UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON



Mithras House, Lewes Road, Brighton,

BN2 4AT

01273 644644

admissions@brighton.ac.uk

www.brighton.ac.uk

COMPUTER SCIENCE (GAMES)

4 years sandwich — Hon BSc

COMPUTING (COMPUTER GAMES DEVELOPMENT)

2 years full-time — Fdg FdSc

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CHILTERNS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, Bucks

HP11 2JZ

01494 605060

admissions@bcuc.ac.uk

www.bcuc.ac.uk

GAMES DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Three years full-time — Hon BSc

MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY (GAMES DESIGN)

Three years full-time — Hon BSc

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ENGLAND IN BIRMINGHAM

Perry Barr, Birmingham, B42 2SU

0121 331 5595

info@ucechoices.com

www.uce.ac.uk

ANIMATION FOR GAMES DESIGN

Three years full-time — Hon BA

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL

EA IN ASSOCIATION WITH EA



LANCASHIRE

Preston, Lancs, PR1 2HE

01772 201201

uadmissions@uclan.ac.uk

www.uclan.ac.uk

COMBINED HONOURS PROGRAMME (COMPUTER GAMES DEVELOPMENT)

Three years full-time — BA/BSc

COMPUTER GAMES DEVELOPMENT

Two/three years full-time — Fdg FdSc/Hon BSc

GAMES DESIGN

Three years full-time — Hon BA

CHESTERFIELD COLLEGE

Infirmary Road, Chesterfield, S41 7NG

01246 500562

advice@chesterfield.ac.uk

www.chesterfield.ac.uk

GAMES AND INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Two years full-time — Fdg FdSc

CITY UNIVERSITY

Northampton Square, London, EC1V 0HB

020 7040 5060

ugadmissions@city.ac.uk

www.city.ac.uk

COMPUTER SCIENCE WITH GAMES TECHNOLOGY

Three years FT/four years sandwich — Hon BSc

COVENTRY UNIVERSITY

The Student Centre, 1 Gulson Rd, Coventry

CV1 2JH

024 7615 2222

info.rao@coventry.ac.uk

www.coventry.ac.uk

GAMES TECHNOLOGY

Three years FT/four years sandwich — Hon MSci

UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA

Bowerham Road, Lancaster, Lancashire

LA1 3JD

01524 384384

www.cumbria.ac.uk

ART OF GAMES DESIGN

Two years full-time — Fdg FdA

DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY

The Gateway, Leicester, LE1 9BH

0116 255 1551

enquiries@dmu.ac.uk

www.dmu.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES PROGRAMMING

Four years sandwich — Hon BSc

ELECTRONIC GAMES TECHNOLOGY

Two/three years full-time — Fdg FdSc/Hon BSc

GAME ART DESIGN

Three years full-time — Hon BA

UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

Kedleston Road, Derby, DE22 1GB

08701 202330

askadmissions@derby.ac.uk

www.derby.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES MODELLING & ANIMATION

Three years FT/four years sandwich — Hon BA

COMPUTER GAMES PROGRAMMING

Four years sandwich — Hon BSc

DONCASTER COLLEGE

The Hub, Chappell Drive, South Yorkshire

DN1 2RF

01302 553610

he@don.ac.uk

www.don.ac.uk

ANIMATION AND GAMES ART

Two years full-time — Fdg FdA

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Docklands Campus, 4-6 University Way, London

E16 2RD

020 8223 2835

020 8223 2978

admiss@uel.ac.uk

www.uel.ac.uk

BUSINESS STUDIES/COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

Three years full-time — Hon BA/BSc

COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

with Contemp Art & Visual Media, Story Development, Animation, Business Info Systems, Ed & Comm Development, Film Studies, Illustration or Design/Marketing

Three years full-time — Hon BA/BSc

COMPUTER GAMES TECHNOLOGY

with optional Business Info Systems, Digital Arts/Moving Image, Business Finance, Media Studies, Photography orDigital Arts & Moving Image

Three years full-time — Hon BA/BSc

COMPUTER NETWORKS WITH COMPUTER GAMES TECHNOLOGY

Three years full-time — Hon BSc

COMPUTING & ELECTRONICS WITH COMPUTER GAMES

Three years full-time — Hon BEng

EDUCATION & COMM DEVELOPMENT COMPUTER GAMES TECHNOLOGY

Three years full-time — Hon BA

GRAPHIC DESIGN WITH COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

Three years full-time — Hon BA

MULTIMEDIA WITH COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

Three years full-time — Hon BSc

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING WITH COMPUTER GAMES TECH

Three years full-time — Hon BSc

THE UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex, CO4 3SQ

01206 873666

admit@essex.ac.uk

www.essex.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES ENGINEERING

Three years full-time — Hon BSc

UNIVERSITY OF GLAMORGAN

Enquiries and Admissions Unit, Pontypridd

Mid Glamorgan, CF37 1DL

0800 716925

enquiries@glam.ac.uk

www.glam.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES DEVELOPMENT

Three years full-time — Hon BSc

GLASGOW CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY

City Campus, Cowcaddens Road, Glasgow

G4 0BA

0141 331 3000

admissions@gcal.ac.uk

www.gcal.ac.uk

GAMES SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

Four years FT/five years sandwich — Hon BSc

THE UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Hardwick Campus, St Paul's Road, Cheltenham

GL50 4BS

01242 714501

admissions@glos.ac.uk

www.glos.ac.uk

UK course listing 2008

Game courses from a selection of universities and colleges

INTERACTIVE GAMES DESIGN

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BSc

UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH

Greenwich Campus, Old Royal Naval College

Park Row, London, SE10 9LS

0800 005 006

courseinfo@gre.ac.uk

www.gre.ac.uk

COMPUTING WITH GAMES DEVELOPMENT

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BSc

GAMES & ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BEng

GAMES AND ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

Three/four years FT/5 years SW BSc/Hon MEng

GAMES AND MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon/Ord BSc

HEREFORDSHIRE COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

Folly Lane, Hereford, HR1 1LT

01432 845327

undergrad@hereford-art-col.ac.uk

www.hca.ac.uk

ANIMATION

Two years full-time Fdg FdA

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

University Admissions Service, College Lane,

Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9AB

01707 284800

www.herts.ac.uk

3D DIGITAL ANIMATION

Three years full-time Hon BA

3D GAMES ART

Three years full-time Hon BA

GAMES AND GRAPHICS HARDWARE TECHNOLOGY

Three/four years full-time Hon BSc

THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD

Queensgate, Huddersfield, HD1 3DH

01484 473969

admissionsandrecords@hud.ac.uk

www.hud.ac.uk

CHARACTER DESIGN

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BA

COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BA

COMPUTER GAMES PROGRAMMING

Three years full-time Hon BSc

COMPUTER GAMES TECHNOLOGY

Two years full-time Fdg FdSc

GAME ART AND VISUALISATION

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BA

INTERACTIVE TOY AND GAME DESIGN

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BA

MULTIMEDIA DESIGN/GAMES ART

Two years full-time Fdg FdA

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

The University of Hull, Cottingham Road

Hull, HU6 7RX

01482 466100

admissions@hull.ac.uk

www.hull.ac.uk

COMPUTER SCIENCE WITH GAMES DEVELOPMENT

Three/Four years full-time Hon BSc/Hon MEng

HULL COLLEGE

Queen's Gardens, Hull, HU1 3DG

01482 329943

info@hull-college.ac.uk

www.hull-college.ac.uk

GAMES DESIGN

Three years full-time Hon BA

KINGSTON UNIVERSITY

Student Information & Advice Centre

Cooper House, 40-46 Surbiton Road

Kingston upon Thames, KT1 2HX

020 8547 7053

admissions-info@kingston.ac.uk

www.kingston.ac.uk

COMPUTER SCIENCE (GAMES PROGRAMMING) (INTERNAT'L ONLY)

Four years FT/five years sandwich Hon BSc

COMPUTER SCIENCE (GAMES PROGRAMMING)

Three/four years FT/four years SW Hon BSc

GAMES TECHNOLOGY AND MATHEMATICS

Three years FT/ four years sandwich Hon BSc

GAMES TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA TECHNOLOGY

Three/four years FT/four years SW Hon BSc

GAMES TECHNOLOGY AND STATISTICS

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BSc

GAMES TECHNOLOGY WITH BUSINESS

Three/four years FT/four years SW Hon BSc

GAMES TECHNOLOGY WITH BUSINESS (INCLUDING YEAR 0)

4FT Hon BSc

Four years FT/five years sandwich Hon BSc

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Four years full-time Hon BSc

GAMES TECHNOLOGY WITH MATHEMATICS (INTERNAT'L ONLY)

Four years full-time Hon BSc

GAMES TECHNOLOGY WITH MATHS (INCLUDING YEAR 0)

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GAMES TECHNOLOGY WITH STATISTICS (INTERNAT'L ONLY)

Four years full-time Hon BSc

STRATEGIC INNOVATION WITH GAMES TECH (INTERNAT'L ONLY)

Four years full-time Hon BSc

LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Course Enquiries Office, Civic Quarter

Leeds, LS1 3HE

0113 283 3113

course-enquiries@leedsmet.ac.uk

www.leedsmet.ac.uk

GAMES ART

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BSc

GAMES DESIGN

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BSc

GAMES PROGRAMMING

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BSc

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

Admissions & Customer Services, Brayford Pool

Lincoln, LN6 7TS

01522 886644

enquiries@lincoln.ac.uk

www.lincoln.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES PRODUCTION

Three years FT/ four years sandwich Hon BSc

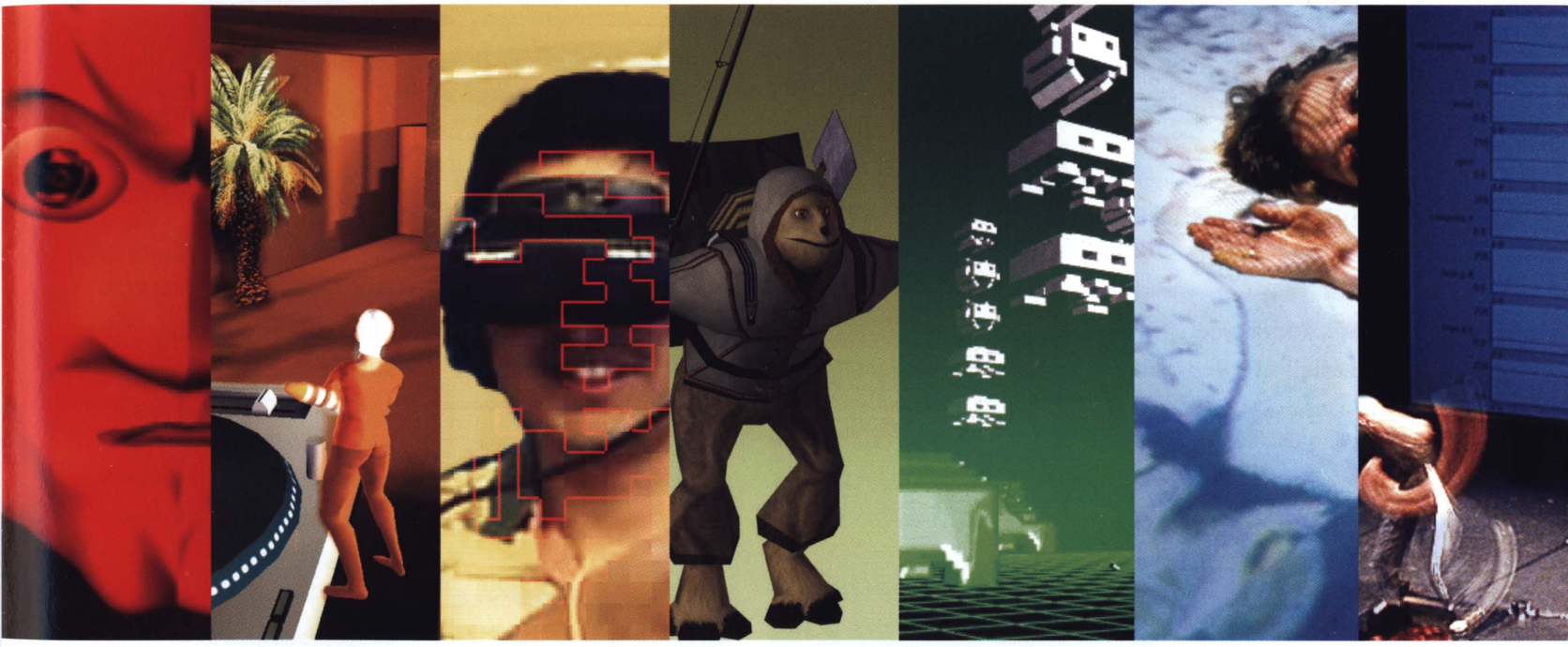
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Four years FT/ five years SW Hon/Deg MComp

GAMES COMPUTING

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GAMES COMPUTING

Four years FT/ five years SW Hon/Deg MComp

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Roscoe Court, 4 Rodney Street,

Liverpool, L1 2TZ

0151 231 5090

recruitment@ljmu.ac.uk

www.ljmu.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES TECHNOLOGY

Four year sandwich Hon BSc

LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY

103 Borough Road, London, SE1 0AA

020 7815 7815

website : www.lsbu.ac.uk

GAMES CULTURE

Three years full-time Hon BA

MANCHESTER COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Openshaw Campus, Ashton Old Road

Openshaw, Manchester, M11 2WH

0800 068 8585

enquiries@mancat.ac.uk

www.mancat.ac.uk

LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY



London Metropolitan University

166-220 Holloway Road, London, N7 8DB

020 7133 4200

admissions@londonmet.ac.uk

www.londonmet.ac.uk

COMP VISUALISATION & GAMES AND MUSIC & MEDIA MGT
Three years full-time Hon BA/BSc

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Three years full-time Hon BA/BSc

COMPUTER VISUALISATION AND GAMES
Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BSc

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ENGLISH LITERATURE AND GAME STUDIES
Three years full-time Hon BA

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Three years full-time Hon BA

GAME STUDIES AND MARKETING
Three years full-time Hon BA

JOINT COURSES - (GAME STUDIES)
Three years full-time Hon BA/BSc

COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Two years full-tim Fdg FdA

THE MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Admissions Office, All Saints Building, All Saints

Manchester, M15 6BH

0161 247 2000

website : www.mmu.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES TECHNOLOGY

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BSc

COMPUTER GAMES TECHNOLOGY (FOUNDATION)

Four years FT/five years sandwich Hon BSc

MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY

North London Business Park

Oakleigh Road South, London, N11 1QS

020 8411 5555

admissions@mdx.ac.uk

www.mdx.ac.uk

COMPUTING, GRAPHICS AND GAMES

Three years full-time Hon BSc

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

6 Kensington Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 7RU

0191 222 5594

enquiries@ncl.ac.uk

www.ncl.ac.uk

COMPUTING SCIENCE (GAMES & VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS)

Three years full-time Hon BSc

NEW COLLEGE NOTTINGHAM

Adams Building, Stoney Street, The Lace Market

Nottingham, NG1 1NG

0115 910 0100

enquiries@ncn.ac.uk

www.ncn.ac.uk

MULTIMEDIA

Two years full-time Fdg FdA

UNIVERSITY OF WALES, NEWPORT

Caerleon Campus, PO Box 101, Newport

South Wales, NP18 3YH

01633 432030

admissions@newport.ac.uk

www.newport.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

Three years full-time Hon BA

GAMES DEVELOPMENT & ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Three years full-time Hon BSc

THE NORWICH SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN

Francis House, 3-7 Redwell Street,

Norwich, NR2 4SN

01603 610561

admissions@nsad.ac.uk

www.nsad.ac.uk

GAMES ART AND DESIGN

One/two years full-time Hon BA/Fdg FdA

NORTHBROOK COLLEGE SUSSEX

Littlehampton Road, Goring by Sea, Worthing

West Sussex, BN12 6NU

0800 183 6060

enquiries@nbcol.ac.uk

www.northbrook.ac.uk

GAMES DESIGN (DEVELOPMENT)

Two years full-time Fdg FdSc

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE AND HINCKLEY COLLEGE

Hinckley Road, Nuneaton, Warwickshire

CV11 6BH

024 7624 3000

email : jacqueline.spencer@nwhc.ac.uk

website : www.nwhc.ac.uk

GAMES DEVELOPMENT

Two years full-time HND

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

Dryden Centre, Burton Street, Nottingham

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EA

NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY



Trinity Building, Northumberland Road
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8ST
0191 243 7420
er.admissions@northumbria.ac.uk
website : www.northumbria.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT
Four year sandwich Hon BSc

COMPUTER GAMES SOFTWARE ENGINEERING
Four year sadwich Hon BSc

NG1 4BU

0115 941 8418

admissions@ntu.ac.uk

www.ntu.ac.uk/

COMPUTER SCIENCE (GAMES TECHNOLOGY)

Three years FT/four years sandwich Hon BSc

UNIVERSITY OF PAISLEY

Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland, PA1 2BE

0141 848 3727

elaine.maitland@paisley.ac.uk

www.paisley.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES PRODUCTION

Three/four years FT/five years SW Ord/Hon BSc

COMPUTER GAMES TECHNOLOGY

Three/four years FT/five years SW Ord/Hon BSc

PLYMOUTH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

Tavistock Place, Plymouth, PL4 8AT

01752 203434

enquiries@pcad.ac.uk

www.pcad.ac.uk

DESIGN FOR GAMES

One/two years full-time Hon BA/Fdg FdA

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

University Road, Belfast, BT7 1NN

028 9097 5081

admissions@qub.ac.uk

www.qub.ac.uk

The Admissions Office

COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Four years FT/five years sandwich Hon MEng

RAVENSBOURNE COLLEGE OF DESIGN & COMMUNICATION

Walden Road, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5SN

020 8289 4900

info@rave.ac.uk

www.rave.ac.uk

ANIMATION (ONE YEAR AT LEVEL 3)

One year full-time Hon BA

THE UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD

Salford, M5 4WT

0161 295 4545

ugadmissions-exrel@salford.ac.uk

www.salford.ac.uk

COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES

Three years full-time Hon BSc

SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

City Campus, Howard Street, Sheffield

S1 1WB

0114 225 5555

admissions@shu.ac.uk

www.shu.ac.uk

GAMES DESIGN

Four years full-time Hon BA

GAMES SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

Four years sandwich Hon BSc

SOMERSET COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 5AX

01823 366331

enquiries@somerset.ac.uk

www.somerset.ac.uk

ENTERPRISE IN COMPUTER GAMES TECHNOLOGY

Two years full-time Fdg FdSc

SOUTHAMPTON SOLENT UNIVERSITY

East Park Terrace, Southampton, Hampshire

SO14 0RT

023 8031 9039

admissions@solent.ac.uk or enquiries@sol

www.solent.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES DEVELOPMENT

Three/four years full-time Hon BSc

COMPUTER GAMES DEVELOPMENT (WITH FOUNDATION)

Four/five years sandwich Hon BSc

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Three years full-time Hon BA

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Three years full-time Hon BSc

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SOUND FOR FILM,TELEVISION & GAMES WITH LANGUAGE FDN YEAR

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ST HELENS COLLEGE (LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY)

Brook Street, St Helens, Merseyside, WA10 1PZ

01744 733766

enquiries@sthelens.ac.uk

www.sthelens.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAME DESIGN

Two years full-time Fdg FdSc

STAFFORDSHIRE UNIVERSITY

College Road, Stoke on Trent, ST4 2DE

01782 292753

admissions@staffs.ac.uk

www.staffs.ac.uk

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AERONAUTICAL TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTER GAMES PROGRAMMING

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AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

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AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTER GAMES PROGRAMMING

Three years full-time Hon BSc

BUSINESS COMPUTING AND COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

Three years full-time Hon BSc

BUSINESS COMPUTING AND COMPUTER GAMES PROGRAMMING

Three years full-time Hon BSc

COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

Four years FT/five years sandwich Hon MEng

COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

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COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

and Logistical Info Systems, Applied Statistics , Computer Games Programming, Computer Graphics, Design Technology, Electronic Commerce, Electronics, Film Production Technology, Forensic Computing, Forensic

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COMPUTER GAMES PROGRAMMING

Three years FT/four years sandwich — Hon BSc

COMPUTER GAMES PROGRAMMING

Four years FT/five years SW — Hon MEng/BEng

COMPUTER GAMES PROGRAMMING (BRIDGE)

Two years sandwich — Hon BSc

COMPUTER GAMES PROGRAMMING

and Electronic Commerce, Logistical Info Systems, Applied Statistics, Computer Graphics, Design Technology, Electronics, Film Production, Forensic Computing, Forensic Engineering, Information Systems, Internet Technology, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Mobile Communicatons, Mobile Computing, Multimedia Computing, Music Technology, Network Computing, Network Engineering, Robotics Technology, Software Engineering or Sports Technology

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UNIVERSITY CAMPUS SUFFOLK

St Edmund House, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 1LZ

01473 296451

info@ucs.ac.uk

www.ucs.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

Three years full-time — Hon BA

COMPUTER GAMES PROGRAMMING

Three years full-time — Hon BSc

SWANSEA INSTITUTE

Mount Pleasant Campus, Swansea, SA1 6ED

01792 481000

dale.dewitt@sihe.ac.uk

www.sihe.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES DEVELOPMENT

Three years full-time — Hon BSc

CREATIVE COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

Three years ful-time — Hon BA

UNIVERSITY OF TEESSIDE

Middlesbrough, TS1 3BA

01642 218121

registry@tees.ac.uk

www.tees.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES ART

Three years FT/ four years sandwich — Hon BA

COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

Three years FT/ four years sandwich — Hon BA

COMPUTER GAMES PROGRAMMING

Four years sandwich — Hon BSc

COMPUTER GAMES SCIENCE

Three years FT/ four years sandwich — Hon BSc

COMPUTER STUDIES

Three years FT/ four years sandwich — Hon BSc

CREATIVE DIGITAL MEDIA

Three years FT/ four years sandwich — Hon BA

CREATIVE VISUALISATION

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DIGITAL MUSIC & COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

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DIGITAL MUSIC CREATION

Three years FT/ four years sandwich — Hon BA

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VISUALISATION

Three years FT/ four years sandwich — Hon BSc

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER



Coleraine, Co. Londonderry, Northern Ireland, BT52 1SA

028 7032 4221

online@ulster.ac.uk

www.ulster.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES DEVELOPMENT

Four years sandwich — Hon BEng

COMPUTING (DIGITAL GAMES DEVELOPMENT) WITH DIS

Four years sandwich — Hon BSc

MULTIMEDIA COMPUTER GAMES

Four years sandwich — Hon BSc

THAMES VALLEY UNIVERSITY

St Mary's Road, Ealing, London, W5 5RF

0800 036 8888

learning.advice@tvu.ac.uk

www.tvu.ac.uk

GAMES DEVELOPMENT (GAMES ART, GAMES DESIGN)

Three years full-time — Hon BA

GAMES DEVELOPMENT (GAMES ART, GAMES DESIGN)

Two years full-time — Dip DipHE

UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON

65 Davies Street, London, W1K 5DA

020 7514 6000x6197

c.anderson@arts.ac.uk

www.arts.ac.uk

INTERACTIVE GAMES DESIGN

Two years full-time — Fdg FdA

INTERACTIVE GAMES DESIGN

One year full-time — Hon BA

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

35 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5LS

020 7911 5000

020 7911 5858

admissions@wmin.ac.uk

www.wmin.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES

Three years full-time — Hon BSc

UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

Admissions Unit, Compton Road West, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV3 9DX

01902 321000

enquiries@wlv.ac.uk

www.wlv.ac.uk

COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

Three years full-time — Hon BA

COMPUTER SCIENCE (GAMES DEVELOPMENT)

Four year sandwich — Hon BSc

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www.austincc.edu/[■

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ARIZONA, USA
www.asu.edu ■

UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA
www.ubalt.edu ■■

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS
VALENCIA, CALIFORNIA, USA
www.calarts.edu ■

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA
www.ucla.edu ■

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY
CENTER PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, USA
www.cs.cmu.edu ■

CHAMPLAIGN COLLEGE
BURLINGTON, VERMONT, USA
www.champlain.edu/ ■■■

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, USA
www.colum.edu ■

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, DENVER
DENVER, COLORADO, USA
carbon.cudenver.edu/mume/multimediastudies.html ■

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SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA
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DUKE UNIVERSITY
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA, USA
www.cs.duke.edu ■

GAME INSTITUTE NEW YORK, USA
www.gameinstitute.com ■■■

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA, USA
www.cs.gsu.edu ■

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HARVARD EXTENSION SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, USA
www.extension.harvard.edu ■

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO
MOSCOW, IDAHO, USA
www.class.uidaho.edu/vtd ■

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
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AMES, IOWA, USA
www.iastate.edu ■

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LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA, USA
www.louisiana.edu/Academic/Sciences/CMPS ■

LA SALLE UNIVERSITY
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, USA
www.lasalle.edu/dart ■■

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA
www.umbc.edu ■

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, USA
web.mit.edu/ ■

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN, USA
dmat.msu.edu/games.html ■

MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
HOUGHTON, MICHIGAN, USA
www.mtu.edu ■

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, DEARBORN
DEARBORN, MICHIGAN, USA
www.engin.umd.umich.edu/CIS ■

MINNEAPOLIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, USA
www.mcad.edu ■

NEW YORK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
NEW YORK, USA
www.nyit.edu ■

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK, USA
www.nyu.edu/ ■■

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, USA
cde.ncsu.edu ■

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, USA
www.coe.neu.edu/ ■

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS, USA
www.northwestern.edu ■

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
DENTON, TEXAS, USA
www.unt.edu ■

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, USA
www.cis.upenn.edu/grad/cggt ■

PURDUE UNIVERSITY
WEST LAFAYETTE, INDIANA, USA
www.purdue.edu ■

RINGLING SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN
SARASOTA, FLORIDA
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ROCHESTER INSTITUE OF TECHNOLOGY
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK, USA
www.rit.edu ■■■

SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, USA
www.cel.sfsu.edu/multimedia/ ■

SANFORD-BROWN COLLEGE
ST. CHARLES, MONTANA,USA
www.sbcstcharles.com ■

SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA,USA
www.scad.edu ■

SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS
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